

# The Pulau Mandi Scandal

— The Maltreatment of Coolies on a Japanese Plantation on  
Sumatra's East Coast in 1926 —

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Beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century the east coast of Sumatra came to be developed as a culture zone for tobacco, and later rubber, plantations financed by European and American capital. At the onset, almost all of the workers on these plantations consisted of contract coolies, who had been indentured in foreign lands; but from the beginning of the twentieth century, this plantation workforce came to be populated more and more by native Javanese. Not only was recruitment of contract coolies costly for the plantation bosses, but they were also plagued by losses due to run-aways. In order to deal with this latter problem and protect the vested interests of the employers, the government issued a *koelie ordonnantie*, in which any coolie who absconded before the end of his contract period or who was lax in his duties would be punished under the law. This ordinance also included a *poenale sanctie*, which stipulated that all run-aways would be forcefully returned to their former plantations. What this sanction did in effect was to hand over to the employers actual control over coolie labor; and in turn the planters were now able to force their coolies to work under unfair labor conditions and legally mistreat them.

Between 1918 and 1919 the east coast of Sumatra saw various attempts by Japanese capital to establish rubber plantations there. These Japanese capitalists, following the pattern set by their European/American competitors, also relied on contracted coolie labor to man their plantations. And so, the structure of this de facto slave system hidden beneath the veneer of the *koelie ordonnantie* was introduced lock, stock and barrel into Sumatra's Japanese-held plantations. Also in this colonialistic region, which was characterized by white supremacist racial policies, Japanese owners and managers were granted "white" status and, filled with the false pride of being considered a "first class nation," looked down upon and discriminated against the native people's of the island. It necessarily follows therefore that there existed on these Japanese-owned plantations the conditions giving rise to the mistreatment of coolie laborers; and indeed many such incidents did occur.

Among the incidents of Japanese maltreatment of coolie laborers, the events which occurred on the Sumatra Kogyo Co., Ltd.-owned Pulau Mandi plantation drew special social approbation due to the extreme level of cruelty and barbarism. The enormity of the crimes were probably due to the personality of their perpetrator, a thug named Oriuchi. The beatings, the use of filth to persecute and the imprisonment in small huts remind one of "*tako-beya*", those dens of iniquity which were the torment of Japanese prisoners and day laborers. We could even go as far to say that this incident actually occurred as the result of the articulation between the de facto slavery which existed under the facade of the *koelie ordonnantie* system and the native Japanese institution of the *tako-beya*. Moreover, this *tako-beya*-like coolie oppression was carried out on other Japanese-owned plantations as well, no doubt in order to reduce production costs by cutting labor expenses to the bare minimum. It was a business management tactic aimed at the maximum exploitation of coolie labor power.

However, the reason that the Pulau Mandi incident was made so much of at the time was not only because of its extreme cruelty, but also because it presented one more opportunity by which to build a protest movement against the *koelie ordonnantie* system, especially the *poenale sanctie* clause. The hue and cry calling for the repeal of this penal sanction, which had been strong even before the Pulau Mandi incident, spread far and wide after the facts of the incident were made public.

As a result of the incident, the Pulau Mandi plantation was barred from recruiting coolie labor for nine months beginning in September of 1926. In an attempt to have the penalty resigned or at least shortened, the Japanese consulate in Batavia, representing the home government, held negotiations with officials in the Dutch Indies colonial administration. This type of behavior on the part of its foreign service goes to show how diligently the government worked to protect the rights and interests of Japanese capital as it advanced into the territories of Southeast Asia. Indeed, at the foundation of such actions lies the intent of the Japanese government to expand its trade and investment activities throughout the South Seas.

# Cultural Differences in Socialization Processes

—Maternal Expectations for Development and  
Maternal Strategies for Regulating Children's Behavior  
in Japanese, American and Indian Families—

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This research was conducted as a part of cross-cultural study on socialization processes in children. Maternal expectations for child development are assumed to be important background for child-rearing practices by parents as socializing agents. Maternal developmental expectations were assessed by questionnaire for Japanese, American and Indian mothers and compared between three groups.

There were differences between three groups of mothers in mean age of mastery expectation across 38 items. In addition, there were also cultural differences in maternal expectations; Japanese mothers expected early mastery on the skills of emotional maturity, self-control and social courtesy, on the other hand, mothers in U. S. expected mastery at early age on the skill of verbal assertiveness and social skills with peers, and Indian mothers expected early mastery on obedience to the elders and verbal assertiveness.

The patterns of maternal control strategies were also examined between Japanese, American and Indian mothers. The responses to hypothetical compliance-relevant situations were analyzed and compared. Japanese and Indian mothers were more likely to utilize feeling-oriented appeals and showed greater flexibility than American mothers. American mothers relied more extensively on appeal to their authority as mothers.

The cultural contexts that contributed to these differences in developmental expectations and control strategies were discussed.

Finally, socioeconomic and religious differences were examined for Indian samples, and differences on child-rearing attitudes between Japanese fathers and mothers were also examined.